

Emotional Communication in Advertising and Marketing: A Study of Consumer Behaviour Guidance and Corporate Decision-Making Enhancement Paths

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Abstract: In the digital age of information overload, emotional communication has become an important strategy in advertising and marketing to enhance consumer interaction and improve brand identity. This study examines how emotional advertising influences consumer behaviour, including brand awareness, purchase intention and loyalty building. Using Coca-Cola's multinational marketing campaign 'Share a Coke' as a case study, this study analyses how emotional communication influences consumer behaviour and what key points its success provides for corporate marketers. The study finds that symbolic and personalised emotional connections can enhance consumers' sense of belonging to a brand and spread virally through users' autonomous social interactions, thus increasing brand impression and loyalty. Therefore, when developing emotional marketing strategies, companies should pay attention to consumer preferences and needs, express consumers' personalised needs through products, and think of user-led social interactions in order to achieve long-term brand development and value shaping.

1 INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, where consumers are inundated with overwhelming volumes of information from various media channels, the effectiveness of traditional advertising—centered on product functionality and pricing—has significantly declined (Pereira Teixeira et al., 2024; Deshwal, 2015). Simultaneously, there is a growing demand for emotional resonance in advertising. Consumers increasingly respond to brand messages that go beyond transactional appeals to evoke emotional engagement, construct brand narratives, and foster brand personality. Emotional advertisements that stimulate subconscious responses and build emotional connections have been found to boost sales performance significantly—by as much as 23%, according to Nielsen Consumer Neuroscience studies (Patel, 2023; Brandt, 2016).

Unlike conventional advertising, emotional marketing emphasizes immersion and interaction, encouraging psychological involvement rather than passive reception. Studies by Chen, Ling, and Chen (2023) have identified factors such as emotional

appeal, perceived credibility, and ad engagement as crucial drivers of users' click-through and purchase intentions in the context of social media advertising. These insights offer theoretical grounding and practical implications for emotion-based strategies in brand marketing.

Nonetheless, designing effective emotional strategies tailored to consumers' individual preferences and socio-psychological profiles remains a challenge—particularly across diverse cultural landscapes. Given the variability in emotional values, cultural norms, and media consumption behaviors across regions, brands must shift from standardized communication toward more audience-centric and context-sensitive approaches. Social media has further transformed advertising into a multi-directional process where peer-to-peer influence complements brand messaging. Consequently, companies must navigate complex media ecosystems and cultural identities when deploying emotional narratives on global platforms.

To explore the dynamics of emotional advertising, this study examines Coca-Cola's branding efforts as a case. Coca-Cola has consistently leveraged universal emotions—such as joy, friendship, and togetherness—while adapting its

messaging to local cultural contexts. By analyzing Coca-Cola's emotional strategies and their outcomes in different markets, this research aims to provide strategic insights into enhancing emotional communication for global brands.

This paper focuses on the role of emotional transmission in advertising and its influence on consumer behavior. It investigates how emotional content shapes brand perception, purchase intentions, and customer loyalty. Additionally, it proposes a systematic framework for integrating emotional marketing into corporate decision-making, enabling brands to build sustainable value and deepen consumer engagement in competitive markets.

2 COCA-COLA CASE INTRODUCTION

2.1 Case Descriptions

“Share a Coke” is a multinational marketing campaign first launched by The Coca-Cola Company in Australia in 2011, which centred on replacing the traditional Coke bottle brand logo “Coca-Cola” with a name or heartwarming phrase that is widely used and popular among consumers (Yacub Tanasyah et al., 2025). The campaign was a great success and created a buzz on social media. People excitedly searched for their names or content related to them on Coke bottles in supermarket shelves and analysed them with others.

The campaign has since been rolled out in over 80 countries and continues to be a hit. This campaign fully integrates and combines the local culture of each country, constantly selecting and adding new names and phrases, so much so that it is innovative and localised to a certain extent while meeting the purchasing needs of consumers.

From an advertising and marketing perspective, emotional marketing is a powerful marketing strategy that always resonates emotionally with consumers in a simple and direct way. Consumers do not always remain rational in their decision-making process, and the impact of emotional branding is thus revealed, especially when the audience feels and experiences some kind of strong and lasting brand attachment (Gao, 2022), and creative and heart-touching marketing campaigns. The next section will use Coca-Cola's marketing campaign ‘Share a Coke’ as a typical example of how emotional marketing influences consumer behaviour, and analyse how it can play a role in personalisation, social drive and brand loyalty, and discuss the key issues that should be considered and addressed when designing

marketing programmes. It also explores the key points that companies should consider and address when designing marketing programmes to maximise brand exposure and build long-term emotional connections with consumers.

3 TARGET MARKET

3.1 Segmentation

3.1.1 Demographic Segmentation

The target audience is young people of Generation Z and Millennials, with income levels concentrated at the mass consumption level.

3.1.2 Psychographic Segmentation

This target group has a sense of individual expression, values interpersonal interaction and sharing with others, and has a need for emotional expression. In their lives, they like to try new and interesting things, are active on online sites and social media, and favour sweets like Coca-Cola.

3.1.3 Behavioral Segmentation

Target consumers buy more frequently and tend to make multiple or consecutive purchases in a short period of time. Their purchasing decisions are more likely to be influenced by product creativity, emotional relevance, and personalised elements, rather than price or brand considerations alone. In addition, they tend to derive emotional benefits through social interaction, self-identity expression, and emotional connection and fulfilment.

3.2 Targeting

In the ‘Share a Coke’ marketing campaign, the Coca-Cola Company's main target group is teenagers and young consumers between the ages of 13-25 (Ghosh, 2019). This group is not only active in social media and networking, but also tends to show their self-identity through product features and spends time with friends and family. They have strong personalised expression and emotional needs, and like to find and buy things that relate to their own nature or behaviour in their daily lives, focusing more on the emotional value and resonance of a product than on its value for money.

Therefore, Coca-Cola has accurately grasped the psychological characteristics of this consumer group and transformed the product into a medium for

carrying their emotions and identity. At the same time, the brand takes advantage of the behavioural characteristics of this group of people who are keen to share their lives and obtain information on the Internet, and actively promotes and encourages consumers to share their own Coke bottles and selfies on social media, stimulating consumers to spread on their own, thus expanding the influence and popularity of the product.

3.3 Position

The 'Share a Coke' campaign is remembered and widely circulated for its affordable prices and innovative and relevant advertising and marketing strategies to people's everyday lives (Ghosh, 2019), with a market positioning focused on personalisation and consumer engagement. By replacing the brand logo with a name or phrase that consumers are likely to use and enjoy the most, The Coca-Cola Company has transformed the product from a standard transformation and routine to a point of output of personalised expression for the consumer (Vincent & Kolade, 2019), which has succeeded in creating a strong emotional bond between the consumer and the brand as well as increasing the brand's recognisability and intimacy with the consumer. It also breaks with the traditional product marketing approach of positioning the product centred on its own benefits and price, and instead focuses more on the added benefits of emotional value, expression and social interaction that the product provides. This positioning strategy makes the product stand out in the market of similar beverages and attracts the attention of young people, occupying a unique place in their hearts.

4 HOW EMOTIONAL MARKETING MARKETS CONSUMER DECISIONS

4.1 Semiological Analysis

In semiotic sense, advertisement is an arrangement of different linguistic or advertising elements which include illustrations, slogans, descriptions and so on (Jakarta, 2010). These symbols and signs play an indirect role in guiding consumers and advertisements manipulate consumer perception and behaviour through these symbols (Rudrakumar & Venkatraman, 2022).

In the 'Share a Coke' campaign, the unique textual symbols (popular names or phrases) on the Coke bottles triggered emotional recognition

mechanisms in consumers. These symbols do not only serve as the semiotics of the signifier, but also as the signified, and the emotional arousal, identity and other attributes behind the symbols. This symbolism enhances the emotional value of the brand, so that purchasing decisions are no longer made purely from the perspective of the product itself, but subconsciously triggered by their inner emotions, thus promoting the possibility of purchase. Furthermore, symbolism cannot be thought of in isolation, but rather is associated, defined and thus constructed throughout the language family (Stawarska, 2015). Thus, when consumers see a name or phrase on a Coke bottle, it causes them to associate it with their close family or friends, or an experience, to the extent that it creates a connection with their lives and values, thus creating an emotional projection. In this process, advertising and product attributes are no longer just persuaders to promote purchase, but an important medium for consumer emotion and relationship building.

4.2 Personalized Analysis

At the same time, this semiotic marketing lays the foundation for personalised communication of the product. When consumers see their name on a drink, it creates a strong sense of ownership and emotional belonging and gives them some sense of ownership. It also gives consumers a sense of their own importance to the brand and is an integral part of brand building. In addition, people always like to discover and buy things that relate to their own nature or behaviour and are habitually attracted to the unique look of any product, especially when they feel emotionally connected to that brand or product. This personalisation strategy not only creates a mandatory communication with the consumer without them being aware of it, but also encourages them to find and share names and identities with people who carry special meanings.

This mechanism also profoundly reflects the kernel of emotional marketing, as this personalisation strategy effectively attracts consumers' attention and satisfies their needs and desires (Gao, 2022), thus enabling the brand to demonstrate a strong emotional connection with consumers based on affinity and personalisation, especially young people and millennials in Generation Z. The personalised bottle satisfies consumers' emotional needs while evoking an emotional connection with those around them. Due to the atmosphere of joy conveyed by the text design of the bottle itself, and the fact that happiness is one of the easier emotions to evoke (Gao, 2022), consumers can easily be infected by this emotion to the extent of purchasing bottles with special

meaningful text to share or maintain their feelings of joy. Therefore, when this personalised marketing and emotional infection is visualised and concretised in the product packaging, a strong emotional bond is also created between the brand and the consumer, thus triggering widespread empathy and communication.

4.3 Social Media Interaction

In addition, this strong emotional connection and the psychological drive of social interaction will make audiences and consumers unconsciously share and post personalised bottles on social media, such as sharing photos of themselves with the bottles and so on, thus creating viral communication. User-generated content and word-of-mouth marketing and is an important source of information for consumers (Chen & Yuan, 2020), compared with traditional advertisements, such posts have more authenticity and credibility, and are more likely to gain the attention of others and attract more people to participate. This kind of user-initiated marketing has successfully helped Coca-Cola to expand the impact of the campaign quickly and effectively, and far exceeded the reach and information coverage of traditional marketing methods. In addition, for the purpose of social interaction, many consumers would expect to find their own names or the names of people close to them among the many colas available, which in many ways increased their purchasing power and desire. This is a kind of emotion-driven communication and purchase, in which the product gradually becomes the link and medium for consumers' emotional transmission and social interaction.

At the same time, Coca-Cola Company encourages consumers to share their personalised bottles on social media and keeps sharing bottles with text and showcasing great consumer-generated content on its official social media accounts (Ghosh, 2019). The #ShareaCoke hashtag was a red-hot hit on all major social media, which not only expanded the wide reach of the product, but was also effective in increasing brand loyalty and making it seem more approachable and credible (Gildin, 2022).

5 ENTERPRISE DECISION-MAKING PATH

The success of the "Share a Coke" case shows that personalized emotional marketing, user-active sharing and long-term brand emotional shaping are

key factors affecting consumer behavior. When formulating advertising and marketing strategies, enterprises should not only pay attention to short-term market response, but also pay attention to the long-term accumulation of emotional value, so that consumers become a part of the brand story, so as to establish deep emotional connections, improve brand loyalty and strengthen market competitiveness.

5.1 Take Consumers' Emotional Needs as the Core and Formulate Precise Marketing Strategies

Against the background of the rapid development of social media, consumers' high demand for emotions is increasingly prominent in brand marketing. Enterprises should deeply understand the personalized needs of consumers based on the psychological needs and behavioral characteristics of consumers, so as to achieve more accurate emotional communication. In order to achieve this goal, enterprises should make full use of big data and artificial intelligence technology (Priyanka et al., 2023) to deeply analyze the interest preferences, social behavior and consumption habits of consumers in the target market. For example, the personalized recommendation system is an important tool to improve consumers' emotional resonance. Based on consumers' past purchase records and social interaction data, it pushes advertising content that meets their interests, which can greatly enhance the accuracy of emotional touch.

5.2 Promote Consumers' Active Communication and Enhance the Social Influence of the Brand

Brand influence depends not only on the enterprise's own marketing investment, but also on the independent sharing and interaction behavior of consumers. User-generated content (UGC) has become an important driving force for brand communication. Its real and credible characteristics can effectively improve the brand image and expand the scope of influence. Enterprises can encourage consumers to share their brand experiences through social challenges, preferential incentive mechanisms, etc. to improve their participation (Chen et al., 2023). In addition, working with opinion leaders (KOLs) or communities to use influential people or community members to promote the brand can drive a wider range of consumer groups to participate in brand interaction and enhance the social influence of the brand.

5.3 Build the Long-Term Emotional Value of the Brand and Optimize the Continuous Marketing Strategy

Although emotional marketing can quickly improve the popularity of the brand in the short term, when formulating marketing strategies, enterprises should not only focus on the effect of a single activity, but also focus on the long-term development of the brand, focus on the core value of the brand, and continue to create content that meets the emotional needs of consumers to maintain long-term influence and competitive-ness. Brand Storytelling is an important way to build brand emotional assets. Enterprises can make brand value run through multiple marketing activities by building a coherent emotional main line.

5.4 Balance Brand Globalization and Localization Strategies to Enhance Cross-Cultural Emotional Resonance

For multinational brands, emotional marketing not only involves the shaping of global brand image, but also takes into account the emotional needs of different cultural markets. Combining globalization strategy and localization adaptation, it can improve the emotional communication ability of brands in different markets. When promoting emotional marketing activities, enterprises can adopt the strategy of "global brand + localized emotion" to adjust the advertising content according to the cultural back-ground of different countries and regions, so as to make the brand closer to local consumers. For example, invite local stars or opinion leaders to endorse to make the brand closer to the local culture, or design marketing content that meets the emotional ex-pectations of local consumers in combination with festivals, customs and social hotspots, such as launching emotional advertisements in the Chinese market in combination with traditional festivals such as Spring Festival and Qixi Festival to enhance brand affinity.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Emotional communication in advertising and marketing transforms brand marketing from one-way communication to two-way interaction, thus effectively influencing consumer behaviour, and effective emotional communication can help enhance brand influence and consumer loyalty. An analysis of

Coca-Cola's 'Share a Coke' case shows that Coca-Cola replaced the traditional logo with a personalised name or phrase, trans-forming the product from a single, traditional persuasive package to a personalised emotional symbol with emotional resonance and social interaction. This symbol not only reflects personal identity, but also integrates the consumer as part of the brand's expression and effectively promotes the spread of emotions and thus has a positive impact on consumer behaviour. In addition, in Coca-Cola's emotional marketing strategy, the symbol and the personalisation factor strongly motivate consumers to engage with the product, resulting in spontaneous marketing on social media. This spontaneous social interaction based on real emotions is the most credible and contagious, and can significantly increase brand visibility and communication reach, driving consumer purchases and continued engagement in communication.

In addition, this study provides an optimisation path for business decision-making. The study finds that personalised emotional resonance, user-owned communication and long-term brand emotional shaping are key to improving brand impact.

The success of emotional marketing relies on accurate data analysis and social interaction strategies. Enterprises should use big data technology to deeply understand consumer preferences, and optimise advertising reach with personalised recommendation systems. At the same time, they should encourage user-generated content (UGC) and enhance the brand's social influence through social media interactions. In addition, companies need to build long-term brand emotional value and ensure the continuity and consistency of marketing activities to achieve a deep connection between brands and consumers.

In the future, companies should balance the unity of brand image and localisation strategy in the context of globalisation, and develop more targeted emotional communication programmes that take into account the psychology of consumers in different cultural markets, so as to build lasting brand value in a competitive market environment.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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